

THE

# MASSACHUSETTS TEACHER.

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## PERMANENCY OF INTELLECTUAL ACQUISITIONS.

WE test the value of almost all our acquisitions by their permanency. No man would account himself rich, who should receive hundreds of thousands at sunrise, to be delivered up again at sunset.

No man may rightly account himself learned, who possesses only the shallow information of the passing hour. The rich man has his productive funds, his bank and railroad stocks, his real estate, ever able and ready to honor his drafts upon them. The truly learned man likewise has his stocks and productive funds, always ready to pour forth uncounted intellectual treasures at his demand. Yet it is too true that many men and many pupils retain nothing and carry nothing but the loose change of science. This is convenient, but it is not enough. It does not carry influence and power sufficient for extensive operations.

It is a matter of general complaint, that so much is learned to be *lost* by pupils,—that they carry so little from the school to the world. This is more true in regard to the facts, than the discipline and moral influence of the schoolroom; and the loss of *facts* is sooner perceived by the multitude. Great as this loss is, pupils may carry away *that* which shall be of untold value to them in life, with scarcely a remembered fact. Habits, principles, and biases are infinitely more valuable than isolated facts. How shall this evil be diminished?

The pupil's success in retaining knowledge must depend upon two things,—the manner of acquiring it, and care taken to preserve it when acquired.

I. We may give permanency to intellectual acquisitions, by awakening a *healthy* interest in the subjects taught. I say, a

healthy interest. Noisy recitations, attended by gesticulation and rapid locomotion, are sometimes set down to the account of interest. They do not belong there. Ordinarily, these are mere mechanical operations, without thought, and tend to confuse. They prevent a clear and complete comprehension of the subject, and are, therefore, fatal to permanency. I mean, that interest which springs spontaneously from mental labor, successful and mastering difficulties by its own efforts. Interest, thus excited, is of a higher and more enduring kind.

We have seen the mountain torrent, created by a summer shower, leaping from rock to rock, and rushing impetuously to the vale. We have looked again, and its channel was dry. So classes, roused by fitful and unnatural excitement, may astonish and delight us by wonderful manifestations of interest and progress, and suddenly disappoint us by falling back to stupidity and dullness. The deep, broad river must have its unfailing fountains. Its ordinary flow will be steady and tranquil. It may sometimes swell within its banks. It may sometimes dash over the rapids. It may sometimes leap the precipice. These things may excite our admiration, while its ever-widening and deepening flow, towards the unfathomable ocean, impresses our minds with the grander ideas of permanency and power. So with that interest which springs from mental labor and mental conquest, ever welling up from the exhaustless fountains of thought.

The teacher will find ample scope for his best powers in devising means to wake up the minds of his pupils. But all must point to one end, — mental effort. He may accomplish much by drawing forth, prominently, the natural attractions of the sciences. He may do more by the clearness and completeness of his instructions. He must lead his pupils on to a full comprehension of the subject, and a healthy and abiding interest will be awakened. How can interest be aroused by a half-comprehended truth? How can the mind be kindled to enthusiasm by what it does not perceive? A truth acquired, always stirs up the soul like an electric charge. Acquisition, in some form, is the grand charm of existence. The eye of the child sparkles with delight at every clear perception of truth.

Can this deep and enduring interest be excited in all minds? Certainly not to the same degree, or by the same amount of effort. But such interest, in any degree, and such interest only, will be favorable to permanent acquisition.

II. We may awaken such interest, and give permanency to intellectual acquisitions, by leading the pupil to do his own thinking, and requiring him to do his own work. This is indispensable. It must be done, whatever else be left undone. Instruction, without this, will vanish like the "morning cloud and early dew."

I once had occasion to visit Connecticut with a private conveyance. A friend, who was familiar with the way, drove for me, and I gave myself up to talking and comfort. A few months passed, and I found myself on the same road, my own driver. To my surprise, I experienced great difficulty in following the road. I remembered no curves, no forks, no cross-roads. I was constantly at loss, often inquiring, and often out of the right way. Several *years* elapsed, and I was again on that road alone as before. Somewhat to my surprise, after so long a time, I knew the road. I was at home on every part of it. Hill, valley, plain, bend, fork, and cross-road, were old acquaintances. I needed neither tongue nor guide-board. Why was this? Simply, because I had once carefully and anxiously picked my way through those towns. I had done it unaided, when a mistake would have cost me time and toil. During my first ride I had no such care, and felt no such responsibility. In like manner we may *carry* a pupil through the paths of science, and find, to our mortification at last, that he is entirely unacquainted with them. Too many pupils have been carried through the sciences, without the necessity of examining their way, or even of holding the reins. No interest was awakened, no mental labor demanded, and consequently no permanent acquisition made.

In my early school days, when country schoolmasters were just beginning to suspect that there were some reasons for the profoundly mysterious operation of extracting the cube root, a schoolmate proposed to me to give a leisure day to this subject. We took an arithmetic and a wood-saw, a block of wood and a fragment of board, and commenced in good earnest the study of cube root. We had seen a set of blocks. We made a similar set, not of very polished workmanship, but such as boys with such tools might make. We then undertook the harder task of making the rule fit the blocks, or the blocks fit the rule. After much contriving and experimenting, sometimes unsatisfied and sometimes successful, we closed our day's work and study, believing that we had found out a clear explanation of every step in the mysterious process. We were delighted and elated. We had before seen through a glass darkly. Now we had brushed aside the obstruction, threaded the mazy labyrinth, and opened every avenue to the light. So we believed, and time has never effaced or even obscured the reasoning processes of that day.

It is hardly necessary to suggest to teachers, that this explanation has been listened to by thousands of pupils, who retained no more than they would of a speech in Choctaw; and it has been forced into the minds of many others, by persevering teachers, to remain only till the closing examination of the term.

The mind itself must struggle after and grasp that which it wishes to retain. Manual labor may often be made subservient to mental labor. The scholar seldom forgets a truth, to illustrate which, he has prepared apparatus or diagrams with his own hand. We should ever labor to make pupils contrive and work for themselves. Such pupils will become men of great attainments.

A few years ago, in a country academy, a whole class found themselves unable to solve a problem in Day's algebra. The teacher gave it back to them for a second day's trial. The second recitation came, and no member of the class had solved the problem. The teacher inquired if they had done all they could do, and were ready to hear an explanation from him. All but one assented, and he was silent. It was a sorry sight,—a whole class surrendering! The teacher was about to proceed, when a young man of the class arose and asked to be excused, as he did not wish to see the solution. He was excused, went to his room, and solved the problem himself. What a conquest that! That young man had the first and highest element of success. In view of that conquest, it need no prophet to foresee his future career. We feel at once that such a scholar must make a successful man. He has been successful. He is now, though a young man, Associate Principal and Teacher of Mathematics in the largest and most flourishing academy in Massachusetts. Such mental labor is sure to be rewarded by intellectual wealth. How great the advantage of that young man over his classmates, in respect to mental discipline. How firm his grasp upon the principles and processes required in the solution of that problem.

From these illustrations, we perceive that whatever has cost us a mental struggle, and been obtained by that struggle, is permanently lodged in the mind. We need not stop to produce proof that the mere "passive recipient" of instruction retains comparatively nothing.

It may be asked, "Shall we never aid the pupil to overcome his difficulties?" Yes, we may aid *him* to do it, but never do it *for* him. If he is bewildered, give him the right direction, but never take the oars from his hands. Great judgment is needed to give the proper amount of explanation and instruction. Most teachers do too much, while their pupils do too little. Some have thought it to be the teacher's mission to simplify truth,—to dilute ideas and sciences till the child can swallow and assimilate them without any expenditure of nervous power. The legitimate and certain result of such teaching is mental imbecility.

Many pupils have not formed the habit of application. If the least obscurity hangs over the subject, they magnify it into

impenetrable darkness, and give up without a struggle. There is but one ray of hope for such pupils. They must be persuaded or compelled to make effort, — "to try and try again." Many pupils too are indolent, and like to see their teacher work vastly better than to work themselves. Such must have the spur, and will be interested just in proportion to the effort they make. Mental effort is the grand requisite. The teacher who secures this is a workman who needs not be ashamed. He who fails to do this must make superficial scholars.

III. We may give permanency to intellectual acquisitions by requiring pupils to study subjects, not words, and to recite by subjects. I lay much stress on this mode of study and recitation. It will be readily admitted, that those truths which are most clearly and completely grasped by the mind, will be longest retained, other things being equal. It is equally certain that the pupil who stands up like a lecturer and presents a subject, must have thoroughly mastered that subject, while he who is led on by artful questions may recite with very little knowledge. We may ply with questions as much as we please, but let the pupil first tell what he knows.

Scholars should early be taught to analyze subjects, — to look after the leading facts and ideas of a chapter — to draw these out from the mass of minor facts and ideas, and state them separately. This exercise will give definiteness to study. It will fix firmly the foundation and framework of the subject.

Many scholars study to little purpose, because they do not know how to study. They open a book and gallop off through a forest of words at random, till they reach a clear space, when they return and gallop over the same ground again. The evil is this: They see nothing but words, think of nothing but words, and treasure up nothing but words. The husk is taken, while the grain is left. They often read on with such thoughtless speed, that they do not learn even words except by almost interminable repetition.

Such pupils need immediate and careful instruction. Select a paragraph, and do before them what *they* ought to do. Look for the leading fact or idea. Repeat it in plain words, and number it, and then pass to another important fact or to another paragraph. Continue thus to select and repeat, till you have made a complete synopsis of the subject. When this is fully committed, the filling up will be comparatively easy. This may be done with young scholars.

The sooner scholars begin to arrange facts and ideas the better. They should be trained to systematic study. The influence of such study, in giving permanency to intellectual acquisitions, is incalculable.

Method in study is as essential as method in business. The

merchant, who should throw into one pile his whole stock of goods, would be involved in inextricable perplexity. The thing wanted could not be found. The scholar who amasses knowledge without method, will be involved in equal perplexity, and will *never* find a multitude of truths that he has once possessed. By analyzing subjects, we bring to memory the aid of association, acknowledged by all to be its strongest auxiliary. Around each leading truth as a centre we gather a whole family of related truths, which will always cling to it. If the first is remembered, the rest cannot easily be forgotten. By fixing the mind upon these central truths, we avoid the confusion which so often follows the effort to retain a multitude of separate facts.

In my judgment, pupils should recite by subjects, and generally without questions. I do not like the *pumping* recitation—the drawing out of the pupil's knowledge by artful questions. It is painfully amusing to see an overkind teacher laboring by leading questions to create a vacuum around the brain of his scholar, so that the least conceivable particle of knowledge may expand into an answer, and develop itself from the end of the tongue in a hesitating "yes, sir."

It is a kind of fishing operation, by which some fragment of an answer may be snared or hooked up from the depths of the mind, but a teacher can hardly make a greater mistake than to play the angler thus to an idle or heedless pupil.

The pupil soon comes to depend on the hints of the teacher to bring an answer to his mind. He must be baited with hints and questions, or nothing can be caught. Such a course can never make an independent scholar. With the teacher's aid, he knows something; without it, he knows nothing. There is a better way. Let the scholar tell what he has learned of the lesson. If he begins to falter, and looks imploringly for aid, don't be in too much haste to lend him a crutch. It may be better for him to fall. Let him have time at least to know and feel that he has made a failure; he will then see some reason for a new trial. It may cost mortification; it may cost tears; but it will secure attentive study and careful preparation. He will learn to lean on himself, and make truths his own. Is not this better than to allow him to hobble through a whole recitation, mistaking now here and now there; requiring to be held up, now on this side and now on that, to the end of the chapter? Is there any room to hope that such a lesson will be retained? Can any permanent knowledge be derived from it?

Nothing should be said or done which will suggest what the pupil ought to be able to tell you. By such a course, the habit of obtaining clear ideas and whole ideas will be formed—the habit of grasping truth, and grasping it so firmly that it cannot be wrenched away. Many minds seem disposed to nibble dain-

tily at truth, preferring the trimmings—the fruit and sweetmeats—to a hearty substantial repast. Such minds need more mental appetite. There is but one way to produce it. They must take more mental exercise. This remedy operates as surely on the body as on the mind. Make the recitation such that the pupil cannot proceed a single step without studious preparation.

IV. However thorough and systematic we may have been in treasuring up knowledge, it must, like all other possessions, be looked after, and taken care of. “A penny saved, is worth as much as a penny earned.” A truth saved, is worth almost as much as a truth learned. We must, however, abate something for the mental discipline which always attends the learning. We often hear the remark that one man has forgotten more than another knows. In my judgment, he is a fortunate man who has not forgotten more than he knows himself.

We must make frequent reviews in order to retain what has been committed to the mind. We must keep an eye on our intellectual treasures, as we do on other treasures, or very likely they will escape us. In this respect, we should be literary misers. To take care of valuable treasures is a virtue. The lover of money follows with untiring watchfulness every outlay and every investment. He aids his memory by memorandums, journals, and ledgers, lest some unlucky dollar should escape him. He demands certificates, bonds, and sureties.

How is it with the scholar? In a great majority of instances, his course is the reverse. He learns and leaves. The most important truths are obtained, sometimes by great labor, and soon thrown aside like useless rubbish.

Subjects are studied, perhaps with care, and then lost sight of in the eager pursuits of business or the study of new subjects. This is bad economy. The judicious teacher will labor as diligently to promote the habit of carefully preserving knowledge, as the habit of acquiring correctly and rapidly. He should run backward daily over past lessons, and give his pupils a fresh glance at their intellectual treasures. He should take care that, during their school days, they lose sight of no subject which they have once mastered. A recitation may often be profitably devoted to a subject studied long before. The sciences, like the streets of a city, often meet and cross each other. In a new study we often fall in with an old truth. Let the teacher seize these occasions to test the pupil's knowledge and to renew previous impressions.

A distinguished scholar has said that fifteen minutes each day, devoted to classical study, will preserve whole and fresh the acquisitions of a college course. I believe it. The same is true in regard to the common school. Can fifteen minutes be

better employed? He who will not look after his treasures must be content to lose them.

I will add but a single suggestion to this protracted article. The young receive the most vivid and lasting impressions through the sense of sight. Let the teacher use this fact wherever practicable. Let him keep before the eye those particular things in respect to which the memory or perception of the scholar has been at fault. For example, let the one who has failed in spelling write the misspelt word upon the blackboard, with the correction. This practice may also be applied to cases of bad spelling in composition. Let these words remain where they may be seen and learned. False syntax, and the improper use of words, may be effectually corrected in the same way. Let the pupil who utters an ungrammatical sentence, write it and correct it, and he will hardly fail to remember it. It is not enough for the teacher, simply to say *wrong*, and then pronounce the right. Let the pupil's own hand labor, and his eye see. Outline maps in geography, and diagrams in philosophy, are of great importance on the same principle. Indeed, in almost every branch of study, the eye may be employed to fix and deepen impressions.

I have taught too long to believe that all scholars can be made to remember everything, but I believe that far more may be retained and less forgotten if teachers will give more careful attention to this subject.

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### IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.

ONE of the most fruitful sources of evil in our school operations, is the irregular attendance of scholars. If a school is properly classified, and the lessons explained and recited as they should be, no scholar can be absent from a single recitation, without injury to himself and detriment to the whole class. He injures himself, not only by losing the advantage of that recitation, but also by being less prepared to receive profit from the next. The whole class suffer on his account, because additional draught is made on the teacher to repeat to the delinquent scholar, the explanation given to the class in his absence. Except in sickness, and in circumstances beyond human control, the parent, by permitting his scholars to be irregular at school, is not only injuring his own children, but also those of his neighbor. He may plead that he has a right to wrong his own children, but can he plead any right to inflict this wrong on the children of his neighbors? — *E. M. Thurston's Report.*

## PRACTICAL EDUCATION.

THE age demands that everything should be practical, and of course that education should be. But what is *practical* education? In the commonly understood sense, it is that which will fit for usefulness in business affairs. And education should be practical in this sense. Thus, in teaching Arithmetic, special attention should be given to those rules which will be required in actual service. Examples should be taken, as far as possible, from actual business. Grammar should be immediately applied to the conversation of the schoolroom, to common mistakes, and to familiar phrases heard in the streets, or read in the newspapers. In Geography, let the scholar's own town, county, and State be first studied. Let the places, often mentioned in the newspapers, the routes of travel, the marts of trade, the scenes of remarkable passing events, be sought out on the map; and always let Geography and History go together. Let Natural Science be taught from Nature; and in Mechanics, let the scholars go with the teacher to the workshop, and point out there the operation of the principles they have learned from books, or seen illustrated by the operation of the schoolroom.

But this kind of practical education is, after all, to be regarded as a means, not as an end. The end of life is not to make good merchants or mechanics, but rather wise and good men—and this will be the aim of a true practical education. Knowledge applied to practical affairs is, however, on all accounts, the best knowledge, and is better retained. Much that is learned at school is quickly forgotten, because it is put to no use afterwards; but connect the scholar's knowledge with actual life, and it will be always remembered. Teach the boy to see the principles of Mechanics in the workshop, and always, when he goes into a workshop, his school knowledge will come back to him.

Teach the girl to apply her chemistry to cookery, and her after household employments will preserve her scientific attainments. The natural sciences will live for us in nature, our History and Geography will accompany us in our travels, and we shall travel when we read. Our Grammar will be in our daily speech, and in our correspondence. Knowledge, thus applied, will also be more exact and thorough, and what is of still greater importance, it will afford a better discipline to the mind. A strong and well-disciplined mind is the most useful and powerful instrument for doing every kind of work.

If that education is practical which fits a scholar to make a machine well, how much more does that deserve to be called practical education which helps to form a good mind.

Practical education, then, will aim to develop, strengthen, and discipline the mind. It will regard peculiarities of mental constitution, it will aim to fit the scholar to do his part in the business of life, but it will make these subserve, as completely as possible, the higher end of developing, to the utmost, the powers of the mind. *That* rather than success in business, is the true end of business itself. But one thing more. A true practical education should look beyond immediate utility, permanent and accurate knowledge, and even mental discipline and development. It should lead on to the discovery of the great universal laws, the underlying principles of all things. The favorite name of those who make what is popularly called "practical education," alone important, is Bacon. But says Maurice:—

"If those who eulogize Bacon as the great Utilitarian philosopher, would study him, they would find him denouncing, as one of the main hindrances to true knowledge and progress, the desire for facts that should be fructiferous and not luciferous.—The whole object of his writings was to teach how, in facts, one may seek for laws, not how, out of a heap of observations, one may make first a theory and then a machine. To the passion for mere effects, and what are called practical results, he attributed most of the delusions and crimes of the alchemists; and unquestionably if he were to appear in our day, and were to hear himself eulogized, as the man who taught how much nobler a thing it is to make shoes than to seek for principles, he would believe that the very mischiefs out of which he had been the means of delivering his countrymen, were coming back upon them through the abuse of his own wisdom."

No, the great practical end of education is to reach those living truths, those eternal laws, upon which all things depend, and which themselves depend upon and lead the mind up to God, the law, and truth, and life of all things.

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### PREDICTION OF THE FIRST ECLIPSE.

BY PROF. O. MITCHELL.

To those who have given but little attention to the subject, even in our own day, with all the aids of modern science, the prediction of an eclipse, seems sufficiently mysterious and unintelligible. How then it was possible, thousands of years ago, to accomplish this same great object, without any just views of the structure of the system, seems utterly incredible. Follow me, then, while I attempt to reveal the train of reasoning which led to the prediction of the first eclipse of the sun, the most daring prophecy ever made by human genius. Follow, in imag-

ination, this bold interrogator of the skies to his solitary mountain summit—withdrawn from the world—surrounded by his mysterious circles, there to watch and ponder through the long nights of many—many years. But hope cheers him on, and smooths his rugged pathway. Dark and deep as is the problem, he sternly grapples with it, and resolves never to give over till victory crowns his efforts.

He has already remarked, that the moon's track in the heavens crossed the sun's, and that this point of crossing was in some way intimately connected with the coming of the dread eclipse. He determines to watch and learn whether the point of crossing was fixed, or whether the moon, in each successive revolution, crossed the sun's path at a different point. If the sun in its annual revolution could leave behind him a track of fire, marking his journey among the stars, it is found that this same track was followed from year to year, and from century to century, with undeviating precision. But it was soon discovered, that it was far different with the moon. In case she too could leave behind her a silver thread of light, sweeping round the heavens, in completing one revolution, this thread would not join, but would wind around among the stars in each revolution, crossing the sun's fiery track at a point west of the previous crossing. These points of crossing were called the *moon's nodes*. At each revolution the node occurred further west, until, after a cycle of about nineteen years, it had circulated in the same direction entirely around the ecliptic. Long and patiently did the astronomer watch and wait, each eclipse is duly observed, and its attendant circumstances are recorded, when, at last, the darkness begins to give way, and a ray of light breaks in upon his mind. He finds that no eclipse of the sun ever occurs unless the *new moon is in the act of crossing the sun's track*. Here was a grand discovery.—He holds the key which he believes will unlock the dread mystery, and now, with redoubled energy, he resolves to thrust it into the wards and drive back the bolts.

To predict an eclipse of the sun, he must sweep forward, from new moon to new moon, until he finds some new moon which should occur while the moon was in the act of crossing from one side to the other of the sun's track.—This certainly was possible. He knew the exact period from new moon to new moon, and from one crossing of the ecliptic to another. With eager eye he seizes the moon's places in the heavens, and her age, and rapidly computes where she will be at her next change. He finds the new moon occurring far from the sun's track; he runs round another revolution; the place of the new moon falls closer to the sun's path, and the next yet closer, until, reaching forward with piercing intellectual vigor, he at last finds a new

moon which occurs precisely at the computed time of the passage across the sun's track. Here he makes his stand, and on the day of the occurrence of that new moon, he announces to the startled inhabitants of the world, that the sun shall expire in dark eclipse.—Bold prediction!—Mysterious prophet! with what scorn must the unthinking world have received this solemn declaration. How slowly do the moons roll away, and with what intense anxiety does the stern philosopher await the coming of that day which should crown him with victory, or dash him to the ground in ruin and disgrace. Time to him moves on leaden wings; day after day, and at last hour after hour, roll heavily away. The last night is gone—the moon has disappeared from his eagle gaze in her approach to the sun, and the dawn of the eventful day breaks in beauty on a slumbering world.

This daring man, stern in his faith, climbs alone to his rocky home, and greets the sun as he rises and mounts the heavens, scattering brightness and glory in his path. Beneath him is spread out the populous city, already teeming with life and activity. The busy morning hum rises on the still air, and reaches the watching-place of the solitary astronomer. The thousands below him, unconscious of his intense anxiety, buoyant with life, joyously pursue their rounds of business, their cycles of amusement. The sun slowly climbs the heavens, round and bright, and full orb'd. The lone tenant of the mountain-top almost begins to waver in the sternness of his faith, as the morning hours roll away. But the time of his triumph, long delayed, at length begins to dawn: a pale and sickly hue creeps over the face of nature. The sun has reached his highest point, but his splendor is dimmed, his light is feeble. At last it comes! Blackness is eating away his round disc,—onward with slow but steady pace the dark veil moves, blacker than a thousand nights,—the gloom deepens,—the ghastly hue of death covers the universe,—the last ray is gone, and horror reigns. A wail of terror fills the murky air,—the clangor of brazen trumpets resounds,—an agony of despair dashes the stricken millions to the ground, while that lone man, erect on his rocky summit, with arms outstretched to heaven, pours forth the grateful gushings of his heart to God, who had crowned his efforts with triumphant victory. Search the records of our race, and point me, if you can, to a scene more grand, more beautiful. It is to me the proudest victory that genius ever won. It was the conquering of nature, of ignorance, of superstition, of terror, all at a single blow, and that blow struck by a single arm.—And now do you demand the name of this wonderful man! Alas! what a lesson of the instability of earthly fame are we taught in this simple recital.—He who had raised himself immeasura-

bly above his race,—who must have been regarded by his fellows as little less than a god, who had inscribed his fame on the very heavens, and had written it in the sun, with a “pen of iron, and the point of a diamond:” even this one has perished from the earth—name, age, country, are all swept into oblivion, but his proud achievement stands.. The monument reared to his honor stands, and although the touch of time has effaced the lettering of his name, it is powerless, and cannot destroy the fruits of his victory.

A thousand years roll by: the astronomer stands on the watch-tower of old Babylon, and writes for posterity the records of an eclipse; this record escapes destruction, and is safely wafted down the stream of time. A thousand years roll away: the old astronomer—surrounded by the fierce, but wondering Arab, again writes, and marks the day which witnesses the sun’s decay. A thousand years roll heavily away: once more the astronomer writes from amidst the gay throng that crowds the brightest capital of Europe. Record is compared with record, date with date, revolution with revolution, the past and present are linked together,—another struggle commences, and another victory is won. Little did the Babylonian dream that he was observing for one who, after the lapse of three thousand years, should rest upon this very record the successful resolution of one of nature’s darkest mysteries.

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#### E. M. THURSTON’S REPORT.

WE have received the “Fourth Report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine.” It is an able document, showing great labor and care in collecting school statistics, and contains an unanswerable argument in favor of the economy of expending money to improve common schools. The Secretary says: “The unwillingness, on the part of many, to aid in our educational reform, has arisen from a vague and indefinite notion that our school system, in a pecuniary aspect, is an outlay instead of an income;—that every successful attempt to elevate the system, by prolonging the schools and improving the teachers, would make an additional draft on the pocket, without any proper equivalent.” He shows by facts and figures, that the common school, with all its defects, is a source of revenue: “That the State possesses, in her children, resources from which she can derive more wealth than can be obtained from her forests of lumber, her mountains of iron, and her quarries of marble and granite.”

The average attendance, in the State of Maine, is less than one half the children between 4 and 20 years of age.

## CONNECTICUT.

BY FITZ GREENE HALLECK.

AND still her gray rocks tower above the sea  
 That murmurs at their feet, a conquered wave ;  
 'Tis a rough land of earth, and stone, and tree,  
 Where breathes no castled lord or cabined slave ;  
 Where thoughts, and tongues, and hands are bold and free,  
 And friends will find a welcome, foes a grave ;  
 And where none kneel save when to Heaven they pray,  
 Nor even then unless in their own way.

Theirs is a pure republic, wild, yet strong,  
 A "fierce democracie," where all are true  
 To what themselves have voted—right or wrong—  
 And to their laws, denominated blue ;  
 (If red, they might to DRACO's code belong ;)  
 A vestal State, which power could not subdue,  
 Nor promise win—like her own eagle's nest,  
 Sacred—the San Marino of the west.

A justice of the peace, for the time being,  
 They bow to, but may turn him out next year ;  
 They reverence their priest, but, disagreeing  
 In price or creed, dismiss him without fear ;  
 They have a natural talent for foreseeing  
 And knowing all things ; and should PARK appear,  
 From his long tour in Africa, to show  
 The Niger's source, they'd meet him with—*We know.*

They love their land, because it is their own,  
 And scorn to give aught other reason why ;  
 Would shake hands with a king upon his throne,  
 And think it kindness to his majesty ;  
 A stubborn race, fearing and flattering none.  
 Such are they nurtured, such they live and die ;  
 All—but a few apostates, who are meddling  
 With merchandise, pounds, shillings, pence, and peddling.

Or, wandering through the southern countries, teaching  
 The A, B, C, from Webster's spelling-book ;  
 Gallant and godly, making love, and preaching,  
 And gaining, by what they call "hook and crook,"  
 And what the moralists call overreaching,  
 A decent living. The Virginians look  
 Upon them with as favorable eyes  
 As Gabriel on the Devil in Paradise.

But these are but their outcasts. View them near,  
 At home, where all their worth and pride is placed ;  
 And there their hospitable fires burn clear,  
 And there the lowliest farm-house hearth is graced  
 With manly hearts, in piety sincere ;  
 Faithful in love, in honor stern and chaste,  
 In friendship warm and true, in danger brave ;  
 Beloved in life, and sainted in the grave.

And minds have there been nurtured, whose control  
Is felt even in their nation's destiny ;  
Men who swayed senates with a statesman's soul,  
And look'd on armies with a leader's eye ;  
Names that adorn and dignify the scroll  
Whose leaves contain their country's history.

And when you dream of woman, and her love ;  
Her truth, her tenderness, her gentle power ;  
The maiden, listening in the moonlight grove ;  
The mother, smiling in her infant's bower ;  
Forms, features, worshipped while we breathe or move,  
Be, by some spirit of your dreaming hour,  
Borne, like Loretto's chapel, through the air,  
To the green land I sing, then wake ; you'll find them there !

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### WORK AND WAIT.

"Let him that teacheth, *wait* on teaching."—*Scripture.*

TEACHER ! Tis thine to work and wait ;  
But on this thought depend :  
"Our just reward may fail till late,  
But yet 't will crown the end !"

Then wait, and work with patient zeal,  
And meekly trust the Lord ;  
To him prefer thy great appeal,  
And wait his just award.

To sow the precious seed, *thy* care,  
And work through hopes and fears,  
And watch the ground with fervent prayer,  
And water with thy tears.

O, hide the Truth beneath the soil,  
And wait the promised grain !  
For he that plants, with prayer and toil,  
Can never plant in vain.

Inspire with zeal, with taste refined,  
And kindle learning's ray,  
And pour within the darkened mind  
The glorious light of day.

What though thou gain nor wealth nor praise ?  
Be this thy fortune now,  
To quicken thought, — a Mind to raise,  
And more than monarch thou !

Take courage, then, and work and wait !  
On this dear thought depend :  
"Our just reward may fail till late,  
But yet 'twill crown the end !"

## THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

This Association met at Northampton, Aug. 13, and continued its sessions three days. We propose to give a general sketch, rather than a detailed account of its proceeding. The following Board of officers was elected for the ensuing year.

*President*.—GIDEON F. THAYER, Boston.

*Vice-Presidents*.—Thomas Sherwin, Boston; John Kingsbury, Providence, R. I.; Barnum Field, Boston; Samuel Pettes, Roxbury, Mass.; Barnas Sears, Newton, Mass.; Horace Mann, Newton, Mass.; Benjamin Greenleaf, Bradford, Mass.; Daniel Kimball, Needham, Mass.; William Russell, Merrimac, N. H.; Solomon Adams, Boston; Henry Barnard, Hartford, Ct.; William B. Fowle, Boston; Edwin D. Sanborn, Hanover, N. H.; William H. Wells, Newburyport, Mass.; Richard S. Rust, Northfield, N. H.; Alfred Greenleaf, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Nathan Bishop, Providence, R. I.; William D. Swan, Boston; Charles Northend, Salem, Mass.; Roger S. Howard, Thetford, Vt.; Samuel S. Greene, Boston; Benjamin Labaree, Middlebury, Vt.; Edward Wyman, St. Louis, Mo.; Thomas Cushing, Jr., Boston; Rufus Putnam, Salem, Mass.; Ariel Parish, Springfield, Mass.; Leander Wetherell, Rochester, N. Y.

*Recording Secretary*.—John Batchelder, Lynn, Mass.

*Corresponding Secretaries*.—Charles Brooks, Boston; Geo. Allen, Jr., Boston.

*Treasurer*.—William D. Ticknor.

*Curators*.—Nathan Metcalf, Boston; William O. Ayres, Boston; Samuel Swan, Boston.

*Censors*.—Wm. J. Adams, Boston; Joseph Hale, Boston; J. D. Philbrick, Boston.

*Councillors*.—Amos Perry, Providence, R. I.; Daniel Mansfield, Cambridge, Mass.; S. W. King, Lynn, Mass.; D. P. Galloup, Salem, Mass.; Albert A. Gamwell, Providence, R. I.; Jacob Batchelder, Jr., Lynn, Mass.; Elbridge Smith, Cambridge, Mass.; Solomon Jenner, New York; Thomas Baker, Gloucester, Mass.; J. B. Thompson, New York; F. N. Blake, Barnstable, Mass.; Charles Hutchins, Rockport, Mass.

In the language of its former president, "the leading object of the American Institute of Instruction is to promote the cause of popular education by diffusing useful knowledge in regard to it." The means employed in the prosecution of this object have been chiefly lectures, discussions, and reports.

"It has had lectures upon physical education from some of the most eminent physicians and physiologists of New England; upon methods of discipline and instruction, from many of the most experienced teachers; upon the moral relations of educa-

tion, from some of the deepest thinkers and best men; upon numerous points in literature, as directly affecting education, from some of its best scholars; upon its political and legal relations, from profound civilians and jurists; upon leading points in natural, mathematical, and physical science, from "some of the most scientific men in the country."

The attendance first claims our notice. It was one of the largest gatherings of teachers ever held in this country; numbering, we judge, about 600. Remote sections of the country were represented. Massachusetts was there, with her veterans and striplings, by the hundred. Every New England State had its representatives. New York was strong in numbers, and stronger in spirit and talent. With these sat the choice spirits from New Jersey, Maryland, Washington, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Missouri. Such was the multitude gathered for a single object—to promote the interests of education. We frequently observed the meeting of the old members from different States. They hailed and shook each other like brothers. Words of welcome rang out, which sent the blood bounding through the veins even of a looker-on. It was a festival to them; just such a festival as the schoolmaster needs, to shake the "cobwebs from his brain." If any man doubts whether schoolmasters are social beings, we advise him to attend the next meeting of the Institute. Let him take a peep at the schoolmaster "abroad," among his brethren and sisters, "cultivating the social affections."

These meetings of old friends are not only joyous, but practically and professionally useful. Schoolmasters *will be* schoolmasters. In the private circle, the joke, the narrative, and the animated discussion, often refer to the school. In this way, I believe, we derive the best half of our improvement, at such a gathering.

Ten excellent lectures were delivered by the following gentlemen: Hon. Henry Barnard, Rev. J. P. Cowles, Rev. L. Whiting, Barnum Field, C. C. Chase, J. D. Philbrick, Edward Wyman, Solomon Jenner, Hon. A. Walker, and Rev. Dr. Gannet.

The lectures opened with a cheering account of the progress of common school education.

It is a most important fact that the *Press* has been greatly enlisted in the cause of popular education. Not twenty years ago, almost all the papers of the country were carefully examined, and less than three columns of educational matter was found. Now, from a narrower search, as *many papers* could be entirely filled up. Besides this, numerous journals, devoted entirely to educational interests, are well sustained and widely circulated. To those who understand the almost omnipotent influence of the

public press over public sentiment, this is a most encouraging fact. These papers find their way to all classes in every nook and corner of the land. Leading men and obscure men, parents and children, read them. Sparks are dropped, and fires are kindled, whose light and heat inevitably reach and infuse new life into the common school.

Another important feature of this meeting was the marked favor manifested towards female teachers. There was but one voice on this subject. The employment of females in the Boston grammar schools is comparatively of recent origin. Many distinguished male teachers from that city bore unhesitating testimony to the success of the experiment. In aptness to teach, in her softening influence over the manners, in her moral power, in patience, devotedness, and zeal, the female teachers of our land occupy a proud preëminence. To the honor of the American Institute, this was cheerfully accorded to them. That ungrateful and illiberal spirit which has hitherto meted out such stinted pay for their services, was justly and severely rebuked. In this respect, we trust a brighter day is dawning. Already the female teacher is better paid, though not well paid.

The expediency of mixing males and females in the same school was discussed with considerable warmth. Almost the whole body of practical teachers favored the mixed school as a general rule. The mutual influence of the two sexes, in the same school, under judicious restrictions, is believed to be beneficial to both. The dangers arising from the mingling of the sexes, can nowhere be less than in the schoolroom. The number brought together, and the presence of teachers are generally a sufficient security against impropriety of conduct.

Another somewhat novel subject was brought before the Institute. It referred to the too common incompetency of school committees, and suggested a new plan to remedy the evil. It proposes that a committee be elected for each county to examine teachers, and regulate the introduction of school-books. This board should consist of men who have been practical teachers, and have been in actual service during the five years preceding their election. The best men of a county should be selected without regard to political or religious creed. They should hold their meetings in the several towns of the county, at convenient times and places.

We perceive at once decided advantages in this plan. It would secure a committee for every town as competent as the most fortunate towns now possess. They would be free, to a great extent, from local prejudices and partialities, which often almost annihilate the independence of committees and open the door to candidates wholly incompetent. It would secure greater uniformity in text-books, and prevent, perhaps, the

introduction of improper books. But with these advantages we are not fully ready to adopt it. One objection occurs to us now. It would diminish local interest in schools. To whatever extent you diminish the labor and responsibility of the active men in the several towns, to the same extent will you diminish their interest in schools. If you say to them, you are not capable of superintending the common school, and send strangers among them, it may offend, and will certainly cool their zeal and lessen their activity.

It is worthy serious consideration whether this single evil will not outweigh all the advantages. With all possible foreign helps, schools cannot prosper without an active interest at home. We still say that the evils aimed at by this new plan are very great, and demand a remedy.

We fully concur in the suggestion that the examination of teachers should be public. The whole community should be invited to see and hear. This will tend to keep back unqualified candidates. It will secure more careful preparation both by committees and teachers. It will be a barrier against unfairness or partiality.

We were particularly gratified with the high moral and religious tone of the lectures and discussions. We have never been present at a meeting of teachers where so high ground was taken. "God's plan of educating man" was presented with great earnestness and eloquence as the best plan. It is our highest wisdom to study and conform to it. Every attempt to improve it will prove a disastrous failure. God's chief means of educating and elevating the race are toil and suffering. Those men and nations who have been compelled by circumstances, to toil, and struggle, and endure, have manifested the highest developments of physical, intellectual, and moral power. Let not the teacher then fall into the fatal error of believing it his mission to make a smooth and level path for his pupil to walk in. The pupil must toil and endure for himself, then shall he become intellectually and morally strong. We confess that we have observed no more auspicious omen than this tendency to lay the deep foundation of our educational system on the *Word*, and Providence, and Government of God.

We should be glad to extend this notice of one of the largest and most interesting teachers' meetings we ever attended, but we cannot. The spirit of such a meeting cannot be transferred to paper. The useful suggestions and noble sentiments which poured upon us in a continued shower cannot be recorded here. Most of them will appear in another form. We advise every teacher to procure the volume to be published, which will contain the lectures delivered before the Institute, at this meeting, 1850.

The President, G. F. Thayer, Esq., of Boston, deserved and received unqualified and universal commendation for the courtesy and energy with which he discharged his duties. The comfort of the Institute was greatly promoted both by his promptness and pleasantry. His closing address was beautiful, touching, and instructive. The exercises were appropriately closed by singing "Old Hundred," the whole assembly standing. We came away reluctantly, feeling that we were a better man and a better teacher, and proud to belong to a profession represented by so goodly a multitude.

### SPELLING.

[THE following article was prepared and sent to the publishers before the August number of the Teacher appeared. We believe it will be read with interest and profit, although the same method is referred to, in an article of that No. — Ed.]

Whether Spelling should be ranked among the "lost arts," or "occult sciences," has not yet been fully determined by *savans*. That it is somewhat akin to the mystical knowledge of the old philosophers, who awed the ignorant multitude by their wonderful performances in magic, is suspected from the fact that a thoroughly accomplished speller is a *rara avis*; and for many years past, the language of the poet, possibly alluding to that very individual, has been applicable to the *unlettered* multitude,

— "And still the wonder grew  
That one small head could carry all he knew."

Success in teaching the art of Spelling with facility and accuracy depends much upon the *modes* adopted by the teacher, and the *thoroughness* with which they are carried into execution. Without system, nothing can be accomplished effectually. But system, with an indifferent, inefficient, careless practice, passing through an exercise as a matter of mere formality, without a feeling of responsibility for consequences, will never produce other results than to confirm and stereotype heedlessness and improper habits.

Two elements are especially necessary to the progress of the pupil; viz. *an interest in the subject*, — and *accurate critical observation*. These must, in most cases, be created, — at least greatly fostered by the teacher. Without them, failure will inevitably ensue; with them, adding thorough efficient practice, success is certain.

The object of this article is, mainly, to present the mode which has been steadily pursued, for two or three years past, in a school consisting of 100 to 120 scholars, comprising pupils between the ages of twelve and twenty years.

It may be proper to observe that pupils are admitted into this school on condition of exhibiting requisite attainments in the common English branches by examination. And yet, such has always been the deficiency in this branch, that the exercise of spelling, as a regular class duty, has been found indispensable.

The first and leading object of the teacher has been, to require a knowledge of those words only which are found in most common use,—such as may occur in ordinary conversation, or general reading. It has been found expedient, therefore, to lay aside “Spelling-books,” and resort to the great storehouse of words—the Dictionary;—as the most convenient source from which the most suitable words may be obtained. The teacher commences the term of his school with the design of requiring his pupils to become *intimately* acquainted with a given number of words, during the session,—say *five hundred*, more or less, according to circumstances. The words thus selected are divided into lessons of *fifty* words each, constituting ten advance lessons for the term, the remainder of the time being occupied in reviewing the same.

Each lesson is next written upon the blackboard, visible to the whole school, long enough before the time of spelling for each scholar to study and become thoroughly acquainted with it.

Previous to the pupil's commencing the study of the lesson, it is essential that the teacher pronounce each word distinctly to the school, and require them in turn to do the same. It is well, too, to point out any peculiarities in each word, on which the pupil would be liable to mistake; or, which is better, allow the pupils themselves to suggest what mistakes bad spellers would be most likely to make. Again, the teacher may make a very profitable exercise from the lesson thus written, by giving the definition of each word and requiring the pupils to form a sentence,—*impromptu*,—embracing the word. He may, also, interest the school in giving a brief history of the changes which have taken place in the orthography of words, as they occur,—likewise their derivation. From five to ten minutes, at most, spent in this manner, on giving out the lesson, will be sufficient, if done properly, to create considerable interest in the lesson.

At the hour assigned for the spelling exercise, let each pupil of the school be provided with a narrow slip of paper, (half or a third of a half sheet, cut from top to bottom) at the top of which let him enter the *number* of the lesson and his *own name*. Upon the left margin, let the numbers be written from *one* to the number contained in the lesson. These will be convenient for future reference.

All necessary preparation being now made, let the teacher require every eye to be directed towards himself, while he distinctly dictates the first word, taking care to pronounce precisely as he would in reading or speaking the same word. Instantly the pupil writes, and again fixes his eye on the teacher while the second word is dictated, — and so on to the end. Next, let pupils, previously appointed as collectors, gather the exercises and lay them on the desk of the teacher, who will distribute them among a suitable number of the best spellers of the school for correction. The correctors are to examine every word carefully, and against each word containing an error make a check ; also, at the bottom of the exercise, enter the number of words misspelled in the lesson, and under that place the initials or whole name of the corrector. The exercises are now returned to the teacher, who has the names of all his spellers enrolled in his class-book, and against each name he enters the number of words misspelled by each pupil. Thus he is enabled to tell how many words each pupil has failed in spelling in any given lesson, — also, the number during the term. Let him select the names of all who have not failed at all, during the term, and enter them at the head of his class of spellers, — next, those who have missed one, — two, &c., successively. Thus will the relative capacity of each pupil be manifested, and a wholesome stimulus applied for the future.

After having passed over all the words selected for the Term, the remaining time may be most profitably spent in reviewing the same, in the same manner, — making special note of the character of the spelling or review, as compared with the first lessons. It will be found a profitable and interesting exercise to embody the words in brief sentences and require the pupils to write the sentences as given out.

A few of the advantages which experience has rendered obvious in the use of the method described above, may be briefly noticed.

1. As it regards the *character* and *number* of words thoroughly learned in a given time. The attention of the pupil is directed to a class of words which he will afterwards find most frequent occasion to use, in reading, writing, and conversation. Any peculiarity of combination will be pointed out, and suggestions made with respect to the best mode of fixing in the mind the proper arrangement of letters. Thus the pupil will be saved the loss of time and useless perplexity attendant upon studying a multitude of words which he may never see again, nor have occasion to use elsewhere than in those incongruous spelling columns, as they are usually selected and arranged.

If the pupil can thus be made familiar with the orthography of *five hundred to one thousand* words in a term, he will in one

or two years not only have command of a large portion of the most common and useful words in the language, but the habit of spelling correctly will be so far acquired that he will be far more likely to spell most other words accurately, with little study, than if he had not been obliged to apply himself thus definitely.

2. An exercise in spelling is of little utility, except as a *written* exercise. Oral spelling may answer a purpose with small children, before they are capable of writing, and occasionally, with older pupils, for some special purpose. Spelling orally is theory, — by writing, is practice; and it does not by any means follow that he who is familiar with the former will be successful with the latter; for the mechanical effort of writing is an obstacle with many, who are free with the tongue, that they cannot spell the same words with facility on paper. *Much* practice in *writing* is absolutely necessary to make an accomplished speller.

3. *Accuracy* and *rapidity* combined should become habitual with every one. In a written exercise, no change or correction should ever be allowed. Let the word be once written and thus stand; if any correction is apparent, let it be accounted an error. The pupil should form the habit of doing right, the first time, whatever he attempts. If a letter is left imperfectly formed, so that it might lead to ambiguity, let it be set down as an error; for, if the pupil should leave the second vowel in the word *separate*, so that it might be called an *e* or an *a* with equal propriety, he has not given satisfactory evidence that he knows how to spell the word. By adhering rigidly to this requirement, penmanship may be rendered legible and greatly improved; and if the teacher observe carefully the capacity of his pupils in the use of the pen, by dictating more and more rapidly, as they will bear it, he will at the same time secure rapidity of thought in the mental process of spelling, and facility in the use of the pen in recording the thought.

This subject is thus laid before the readers of the Teacher, not because the method described is new or original, for it is partially or wholly practised by many experienced teachers; but to present suggestions to teachers of little experience, which *may* be of service to them, — also, to lead the way in presenting articles from teachers, who, by giving to "the profession" the benefit of their experience, might afford essential aid to many, and add greatly to the value of our publication, against which the strongest objection urged is — "it does not contain enough of practical suggestions from experienced teachers, in relation to the business and duties of the school-room."

P.

*Springfield, Aug. 1850.*

## MORAL INSTRUCTION.

THE Statutes of the Commonwealth provide that all teachers of youth "exert their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth, committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety and justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity—and universal benevolence, sobriety, and temperance; and those other virtues, which are the ornament of human society, and the basis upon which a Republican Constitution is founded."

The meed of praise has been liberally awarded to our legislature for the wisdom and liberality which has uniformly characterized her acts relating to Education.

It may be well to inquire whether the wise provision contained in the above extract from the Revised Statutes is still in force; or to what extent it is enforced in our schools; and to suggest some means by which its enforcement may the better be secured. There seems to me to be a radical defect in the system of education adopted by many, and perhaps I may say, most teachers. The energies of the teacher, and most of the machinery of the schoolroom, are devoted to the intellect of the child, as though education consisted in a knowledge of Arithmetic, Geography, and Grammar. As though to read, write, and cypher constitute the chief end of man. These are important. The proper development of the intellectual powers should receive a large portion of the teacher's time; but not all. Nor are these the *most* important. Man has a physical and a moral, as well as an intellectual nature. A perfect system of education—is that which seeks a simultaneous and harmonious development of all these.

How is it with most teachers, especially in the common schools? Do they make prominent the idea, that the proper end and aim of all education is the perfection of the moral sense—the training of the child of a day for an immortal existence? We have reason to fear not.

Physical education has not been enjoined heretofore, nor has it received much attention. Consequently, most children graduate from our common schools as ignorant of the laws of health—of the science of human life, almost as a spinning-jenny.

We may hope this evil will be partially remedied, by the late law of the legislature, requiring teachers to be acquainted with physiology. But, for the greater evil, when shall we look for a remedy?

The law is plain. The duty is clearly enjoined, to teach "good behavior." The legislature has done its duty; public sentiment will approve of, and even demand such teaching. Still, the law is a dead letter. Most children learn to add and to

multiply, and become adepts in the art of getting and retaining. But the broad distinction between right and wrong—the sublime philosophy of doing good, and the pure pleasures which flow therefrom, they are profoundly ignorant of.

The remedy is with teachers. Let them seek first to be impressed with a sense of their responsibility to their pupils, not merely as thinking, calculating animals, but as moral, accountable, and immortal beings. Let them read and ponder well that portion of the Statutes which stands at the head of this article. Let them consider what it is to teach “the principles of piety and justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity—and universal benevolence, sobriety, and temperance; and those other virtues which are the ornament of human society.”

Who can estimate the length and breadth and height and depth of the teacher’s responsibility? Well may the conscientious, faithful, and intelligent teacher inquire, “Who is sufficient for these things?”

Let the teacher make the character of his pupils his daily study. “The proper study of mankind is man.” Who more needs this study than he whose business it is to mould and fashion human character? To take by the hand young immortals, and guide them safely through the mazes of youthful passion, and the sins of riper years, to a life of honor and usefulness, and thus fit them for an eternity of bliss?

But how shall this be done? Most teachers would gladly do, if not their whole duty, much better than they now do, if they but knew how.

Allow me, Mr. Editor, to make a few suggestions, the result of my own experience, touching this matter of moral instruction.

1. The teacher should never ground any rule or command upon his own will merely. When the reasonableness of a requirement is not perfectly obvious, it should be explained. It should be made plain that it is founded in right; and that, to do otherwise than to yield cheerful obedience, would be wrong. If punishment of any kind is inflicted, it should be preceded and followed by such instructions and explanations as are needed to show that the teacher does not act from revengeful feelings, or from love of authority, but from a sense of duty, and from a consciousness that the child has been guilty of wrong doing, which can be atoned for only by suffering on the part of the offender. Let this course be pursued, and the effect of punishment, whether corporal or mental, would, in most cases, be salutary.

2. Every suitable occasion should be seized upon by the teacher to impart moral and religious instruction.

I would have no set occasions for such instruction. I well

remember how glad I was to be permitted to absent myself from school Saturday mornings, which, in my school-going days, were devoted to a catechetical exercise, followed by a tedious dissertation on moral conduct in general, and religion in particular. I would have no formal lectures upon morals, nor set times for moral culture; unless reading the Scriptures, and appropriate religious exercises at the opening of the school, be considered such. Unwelcome truths affect us most, when they come upon us unawares. We should endeavor, however, to make moral and religious instruction agreeable. To effect this, we must disconnect it from any idea of tedium. Virtue is intrinsically lovely, while few are so debased as not to be sensible of the ugliness of sin.

3. Every offence against decency, propriety, and good morals should be improved by the teacher as a fit occasion for advice and caution, touching those virtues. For example:—

A pupil is detected in telling a falsehood. Instead of punishing the offender for lying, I would avail myself of the occasion to give my whole school a practical lecture on the duty of always speaking the truth. I would enforce this, by showing the folly and the wickedness of lying. I would give my pupils some passages of Scripture, bearing upon this point, and request all to commit them to memory. I would get an expression of opinion from the whole school respecting this vice, and the reason of their opinion. They would be unanimous in the expression that it is mean and foolish to lie: and finally, that it is wrong, because God has forbidden it. The offender now stands convicted, not by the teacher only, but by the whole school; and what is more and far better, by his own conscience. Such a lesson will do more to deter a child from the sin of lying than all the flagellation which has been inflicted from Solomon downward.

Two boys are reported as having been engaged in a quarrel. What shall the teacher do? Administer a sound flogging to each, and remand them to their seats, with a threat to double the dose, in case the offence is repeated? This is the course most commonly pursued; the effect is just what might be anticipated. If you would teach bull-dogs to fight, bring them together, and rub their ears: if you would make a horse vicious, whip him gratuitously: if you would teach a cow to kick, give her lessons in kicking. The nature of boys, I admit, differs widely from that of horses and dogs. Yet in the matter of education, they have many things in common. In both, like begets like. If you would secure gentleness, you must yourself be as gentle and harmless as a dove. I would not be misunderstood. I am not an advocate of the exclusive moral suasion system. There is such a thing as blending goodness with severity. Indeed, what is more severe than goodness? In the case I have supposed,

the skilful disciplinarian may cause the offenders, without subjecting them to any bodily inconvenience, to wish the teacher would whip them, and let them go. "Then," say they, "the affair would be settled. We have offended the teacher, and he has taken his satisfaction: we are even. But this harrowing up the feelings,—making the matter so public,—I wish I had had nothing to do with it; it will be a long time before I am caught in another scrape of the like." Who can estimate the benefits of such a result? Who can fail to see that, enabling the boy to control his own passions, confers a far higher obligation than any amount of mere intellectual culture.

So of all the crimes and misdemeanors which the daily history of the schoolroom exhibits. Let them be seized upon by the teacher and turned to account in inculcating moral sentiments. Let the teacher go to the Bible, for his code of laws. Let the great law of love, so sedulously inculcated and so beautifully exemplified in the life of Christ, be the law of the schoolroom. Let the golden precepts of the Sermon on the Mount be as familiar as household words in the intercourse of teacher and pupil. Let the teacher labor and pray that he may be instrumental in qualifying his pupils for the duties of manhood, and we shall have more *educators*, and fewer mere *trainers of the intellect*. Our common schools will become what they were designed to be, and what they ought to be, places where children and youth may, *must* learn the principles of "piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love of country and universal benevolence."

R. B. H.

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## POWER OF EXPRESSION.

BY W. C. GOLDTHWAIT.

PRACTICAL education implies what is too often overlooked—the Power of Expression. So far as the world, or even the individual is concerned, it seems of little use to store the mind with knowledge, unless some way is devised by which a portion of this wealth can be communicated to others; otherwise the mind is merely a Dead Sea, that always receives and never gives. It is a principle in chemistry, that bodies that absorb caloric the best, do also radiate best; and it is equally true that those portions of the earth that absorb the most dew, do also send up most abundantly the herb, and grass, and flower. But somehow it has been discovered *here* that bodies may be made to absorb and never radiate; and the treasures of knowledge, and the fertilizing influences of instruction, may be lavished upon a soil, and yet it will yield for the service of others no fruit or flower "after his kind."

Hence it comes to pass that our schoolrooms are filled with pupils who "know, but cannot tell!" They have the knowledge, but they cannot find it. They know just where it is, but, like a thief's honesty in the moment of trial, it is not there! This *genus* is a large one, and it deserves what editors call a "notice," though I think not a "puff." They have studied all science and art, and know everything, and yet know nothing. They seem to be well versed, and "ready to communicate," so long as the question-asking teacher manages the "discharging rod." They are so ready to *answer*, that they seem to overflow with knowledge; it is only kept in with some little constraint. But when, without this assistance, they are called upon for an exposition of what they know, alas! they suddenly find that their knowledge, like farewell emotions, "lies too deep for utterance." As it is said of some cutaneous disorders, it has "struck in;" though I believe without producing any congestion at the centre! But to drop the language of ridicule, we should remember that the pupil *does not know till he can tell*.

And we have *men*, too, who, we may suppose, are well furnished, so far as acquisitions are concerned; but, with all their gifts and treasures of knowledge, whenever they attempt to speak, like Galileans of old, their "speech bewrayeth them." By want of conformity to the suggestions of Rhetoric, they offend good taste, and perhaps sin against Grammar, every time they invoke speech. And of those of whom this cannot be said, how many there are, not so gross offenders, who are, like Moses of old, "slow of speech," and who might confess like him, "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Now these men, like the Midian shepherd and law-giver, have knowledge enough: men with far less have thundered in the senate, and given character to whole periods of human history. But, as one pleasantly observes, "they need to have some talking Aaron spliced on to them;" for without the power of utterance, they seem to confess that they are but half men!

It seems to me that a portion of this difficulty lies in the fact that but little attention is paid to the power of expression. It was a facetious remark of one I knew, that "our teachers take great pains to get knowledge into the head, and but little to get it out again." This points at a common fault in all our teaching; we pay but little attention to the channels of utterance, through which the fertilizing influences of knowledge should flow out upon the surrounding plains. Whether we aim merely to fill the mind with knowledge, or rise to a juster estimate of the business of education, and seek to discipline the

mind, and develop the faculties, we seem often equally to fail in bringing out to a true and beautiful proportion this feature of a perfect education. That this is important, has already been intimated. I now say that it is *one* of the most important ends of training. The design of education is twofold; it is first to make the individual a safer, happier, nobler man; and then to fit him for greater usefulness. With regard to the first, it is obvious to observe that nothing tends more to promote the happiness of the individual, than to impart of his good things to others. And if his wealth be that of the soul, it will also make him richer, and nobler, as well as happier. The sentiment of Scripture will doubtless occur to you, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth."

Whether it be in the matter of eloquence, or song, or the pleadings of that Christian charity that seeks to persuade men of the world to come, those who have preached, and sung, have felt the desire of utterance as a fire in their bones, and have rejoiced in the ability to *express* their emotions; and so, in blessing others, they have been themselves twice blessed. As individuals, then, we need the power of expression.

And then in this impressible age, when the fortunes of men and empires shift as rapidly as the scenery of a dream, we should be qualified not only to display our treasures, and guard ourselves from wrong, and uphold the right, but to reproduce ourselves, and stamp our images deep in the impressible material of the living present. At the speaker's stand—in the pulpit—at the press—in the schoolroom—and indeed in all the walks of life—there are opportunities, such as were never enjoyed before, to carve out character, and predestinate the fortunes of those who are now coming on to the stage, and are yet to be. From the furnace of this ardent age seem to me in some sense to be now flowing those fervid streams of influence, out of which are to be cast the destinies of long ages to come. On this warm and yielding material we are now called upon to make our impression, not in the scars and fire-marks of vice, but in outlines of grace, and lineaments of virtue, and emblems of undying hope. The part, then, that we are to act in the drama of life, also demands that we acquire the power of easy and vigorous expression.

How shall we accomplish this? I reply: We can do much by making it a distinct object of pursuit in the schoolroom and the higher walks of learning. It is said that herdsmen and men of the turf—those Jacobs, who have the care of Laban's cattle in modern times—can develop almost any given traits in the animal races, be it flesh, or size, or speed. Cannot we, who work in the most impressible of all materials in the world—the human soul—develop desirable traits? We

often, alas ! unwittingly develop *undesirable* traits. Who has not seen the cross looks and peevish temper of the teacher and parent copied, as by a mirror (though we should say without *reflection*), in the face and disposition of the child ? When the Rabbi begins to exhibit his fret-work, and growl prophetic of a coming storm, the gates of the temple of Janus will most certainly fly open in the heart of every one of his little flock, and smaller growls will echo to the larger, as "face answers to face" in a brook. From an unbroken course of such treatment, who would expect any thing but an unbroken line of Nabals and Xanthippes ? Can we not develop desirable traits as well ? Can we not train the young and warm affections of the heart to flow out in the language of music and song ? Can we not make the objects of our care utter forth their ideas by the appropriate signs of thought, and *converse* with ease upon what they know of science, and literature, and art ? Nay, I need not ask that question ; for nature herself teaches us to *express* what we feel. Hence we have language, which is arbitrary, it is true, in some of its modes, but universal, and, I presume, God-given. And when the artificial channels of thought clog up and overflow, we have shouts of joy and yells of pain, we have the compressed hand, and the speaking countenance, and the smile, and tear, the most eloquent of all language. The gladness of childhood outbreaks in the laugh, and our very pain registers itself in sobs and groans, and even the *dumb* animals rupture the bands of silence, and in their excess of joy fill the responsive air with music. Hence, too, men who most obey the impulses of nature, — that great mistress of passion, — speak out in eloquence and song ; and the great world of literature is full of what these passion-speaking sons of genius and of fame have said and sung. Doth not Nature herself teach us this great lesson, that

—— "thoughts shut up want air,  
And spoil like bales unopened to the sun ?"

And then, — a sentiment which is too often overlooked now-a-days, — thoughts themselves acquire an additional distinctness from the very attempt to convey them ; so that what we express to others, we do more clearly state and define to ourselves. Hence Lord Bacon says, "Reading makes a full man, but conversation makes a ready man." We sometimes *think* without much care in the arrangement of our thoughts ; but we are seldom so without respect for others as to let our thoughts flow forth till they have been marshalled into regular order, and made to conform to the rules of syntax, if not of logic. When knowledge is in the most proper shape to be imparted to others, it is most fit to be kept by ourselves. As we shall not be likely to put it into this shape unless we are to convey it, we infer

that nothing is more conducive to right learning than the habit of unfolding our acquisitions, and making them intelligible to others. Hence we say again, that, in the training of the young, we should cultivate the power of expression, and teach the child not only to think, but to speak;—not only to acquire, but to convey. It is true, we may not make all our pupils poets and orators; it is not meet that we should. This world would be neither desirable nor comfortable, with no one but poets and orators in it. It is of far greater consequence that we make them practical men, and teach them to speak with propriety upon common matters, and illustrate the rules and not the exceptions to good grammar in their ordinary discourse.

If these remarks are true, we may derive from them a suggestion which will be of great service to us in matters of intellectual culture. Are we teaching Arithmetic, the most important of the primary branches, or Grammar, or Geography, or any of the sciences? Let us not be satisfied, as too many are in this talking age, with simply *inculcating* truth, and creating an impression, as it were, by outward pressure. This is little better than writing a name in the sand. Our claim to consideration, as teachers, lies in our ability to create an *internal activity* and warmth while the truth is presented. We are to see that ideas are received, as well as inculcated. In a word, the matter of any given lesson is to be so incorporated and familiarized, that it may be conversed about in easy and household language. Let us never suppose, then, that we can sufficiently test the solidity of our work by making a few unexpected thrusts at it with an interrogation point. Nor let us be satisfied when the pupil says that he has a clear idea of the subject. Nothing can be more fallacious. Most pupils have no conception of what it is to have a clear idea of any thing which has been to them merely a matter of study, any more than the blind have of color; these of course mean no disrespect to the truth in so saying. Others are so averse to mental labor, that they would impale the very goddess of truth for the purpose of concealing their ignorance. Hence the most sober and oft-repeated declarations on the part of pupils, that they understand the matter in hand, are not to be assumed as proof that they do. That charity that "believeth all things," is out of place here. When we have explained a principle or topic, or assigned a lesson, we may justly expect the pupil to explain it, convey it, illustrate it, in language all his own, unaided by questions, unprompted by catch-words, or signs, or any thing but approving looks. If he has to wait for questions, let him wait a little longer, and learn his lesson!—*Lectures of the American Institute.*

**PERSUASION AND COMPULSION.**—It is better that the teacher accomplish his purposes by persuasion than compulsion; yet far better to accomplish them by compulsion than not at all. He must always be right, and then be like Cromwell's Ironsides, and Napoleon's Lifeguard, never defeated. It is better that the pupil agree with the teacher, and obey his own convictions of right, while he complies with the requirements of his teacher. The teacher should persuade as one who has authority, but prefers not to use it. His authority should always be obeyed though seldom perceived.

He should rule his little domain, as the sun rules the solar system. His influence, like attraction, should be unceasing, all-controlling, and unseen except in its effects. When he persuades and attracts, it should be with an energy that cannot be resisted. Though the planet sometimes seems to deviate from its orbit, yet a steady attraction from the central orb, the *schoolmaster*, brings it back again. So should the teacher bring back the erring pupil by the attractive power of his influence. The comet, in its farthest flight from the sun, never entirely escapes his power, but feels and obeys the mighty influence of attraction. So the most estranged and reckless pupil may often be brought back by the power of kind persuasion.

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**NOTE.**—The Editor of the August No. of the Teacher regrets his connection with it. The reader has doubtless noticed the occurrence of many mistakes on the pages of that No. The Editor can only say, in exculpation of himself, that the matter of that No. was prepared in haste; that, consequently, (though it may seem a poor apology,) the manuscript was scarcely legible to any but the writer; that he earnestly requested the privilege of reading and correcting the proof-sheets, but was denied; and that, therefore, he is made to say, in many cases, what the printer pleased, and not what he himself would say to the readers of the Teacher. On the 225th page, "To *win* the virtues, &c.," should read, "To *raise* the virtues;" 226th page, 3d line, *teem* should be *heave*; 4th line, *strength* should be *thoughts*; 228th page, 7th line, a lie of the types gives us *slope*, while it should be *shape*; 231st page, 5th line, *variating* is a catachresis for *vanishing*, and *plains* should be *planes*; 238th page 21st line, *merely* should be *rarely*; *Cos* should be exchanged for its synonyme *Co*; 32d line, *on* should be *in*; 43d line, *unconsolable* should be *inconsolable*; 239th page, 6th line, *close up* would make better *cut feed* if it were *chop up*; 19th line, *foreground* should be *for ground*; 20th line, *these* should be *the*; 240th page, 13th line, *perpetual* should be *perpetually*; 19th line, *and vapor* should be *of vapor*; 31st line, *beautify* should be *beatify*; 37th line, *engages* should be *enjoys*; 38th line, *linner* is a poor emendation of the printer for *limn*; 245th page, 4th line, *draft* should be *draught*; 46th line, *poised* conveys a singular idea; the writer would suggest *praised*; 246th page, 16th line, our business is not so *rousing* now as in the days of birch rods; it is *wearing*, as all admit; 42d line, *clot* of perspiration is a bo'd figure: it should be *dot* of perspiration; 250th page, 1st line, *but* should take the place of *that*; 13th line, *help* should be *helps*; it is not a prayer—Napoleon seldom prayed; 19th line, *prostrate* should be *frustrate*; 252d page, 35th line, after *pupil*, insert *who writes each word as it is pronounced*; 50th line, *head* should be *teacher*. Will the reader correct these mistakes on the printed page? Other errors occur, but they are sufficiently obvious to suggest their own correction. The Editor takes pleasure in saying, that, unfortunate as these errors are, no blame whatever is to be attached to the Publisher. He has done his utmost to present the successive numbers perfectly correct and in good taste. These *errata* occur, simply because the manuscript was obscure, and because a letter, stating where the proof-sheets should be directed, never reached the office of the Publisher.

EDITOR OF THE AUGUST NUMBER.